

## **CNC September Meeting Minutes**

September 24, 2012

District Council representatives in attendance: Chas Redmond, (Southwest District Council and CNC Chair); Phil Shack, (North District and CNC Vice-chair); Chris Leman, (Lake Union District and CNC Budget Committee Chair); Tony Provine, (Northeast District); Janis Maloney, (East District); Jody Grage, (Ballard District); Lauren Balter, (Magnolia/QA District Council); Mat McBride, (Delridge District Council), Ed Marquez, (Greater Duwamish District Council); Rick Klingele, (Northwest District Council); Bridgette Maryman, (Southeast District Council)

Guests: Beth Goldberg, City Budget Office; Tod Rodman, Morgan Community Council, Pete Spalding

### Agenda and Meeting Minutes Approval

July meeting minute approval tabled until next meeting, as so much time has elapsed since the last meeting and members wanted to be able to review the minutes again.

Agenda was amended to re-arrange some of the order of the agenda items.

### **City Budget – Beth Goldberg**

Beth distributed information on the proposed 2013-2014 budget. Beth will be presenting to City Council on Thursday. 2013 Budget is \$4 billion. General Fund is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the total. Budget grows to \$4.3 billion in 2014. Budget challenges are decreasing. Had been predicting large budget shortfalls for 2013 and 2014. Local economy has been improving and is doing better than the state or nation. REET revenues are increasing. Will be receiving money from Amazon and Children's Hospital for street vacations. CDBG funding was not reduced. There are modest reductions in most general fund departments. Services to residents remain at the same level for the most part. Contribution to rainy day fund is increasing. By 2014 tax revenue should return to pre-recession levels. This is much slower than in past recession recoveries. CNC member asked if Beth could share the revenue models being used by CBO. Beth stated she would request this information.

City is also identifying savings from department efficiencies. Building heating and cooling, parks maintenance, fleet maintenance, management efficiencies are all helping to reduce costs. Parks and Transportation departments have reduced staff due to reduced project load. New firefighter labor contract, lower medical and unemployment claims and 2010 labor agreements are all generating savings. City found funding to support the Volunteer Park Conservatory and the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center. The Parks Department will continue to provide maintenance for the facility. Fees have been raised at swimming pools, city garages, animal shelters. The Human Services, Parks and Transportation Departments are also strategically using fund balances.

Proposed budget makes investments in five key areas:

- Supporting a well-functioning government
- Enhancing public safety
- Upholding the Human Services safety net
- Promoting economic development
- Upgrading the city's transportation infrastructure

Stabilizing city's pension fund, investing in the next generation data center, replacing other IT systems that are no longer supported by vendor.

Investing \$24 million over the biennium to support SPD safety initiatives, including hiring 10 additional police officers, adding automated gunfire locator system, replacing in-car video systems, and enhancing SPD's data analysis capabilities.

Also implementing SPD 20/20 and the settlement agreement with DOJ.

Expanding community center after school and late night hours at seven centers that serve at-risk youth – Miller, Ballard, Northgate, Yesler, Delridge, Van Asselt, and South Park.

Will give contract increases for the 1<sup>st</sup> time since 2009, will expand support for homeless families, will increase the number of childcare subsidies for moderate to low income families, will invest in the Career Bridge program (with OED and Human Services Departments) and will expand support for domestic violence survivors.

Increasing by 450 the number of Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative slots.

To promote economic development will expand the “Only in Seattle” grants to support streetscape and pedestrian improvements in neighborhoods with parking meters, investing CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) funds to promote community development, investing in the vitality of the Downtown Core, and funding 16 FTEs in DPD to assist with demand or land use and building permits. These positions are entirely revenue supported.

In transportation infrastructure improvements city will invest \$21 million to maintain and upgrade the city’s transportation assets. Will implement the Transit Master Plan and high capacity transit, will add safe routes to schools projects, sidewalk safety repair, Center City mobility plan, greenway development and Burke Gilman Trail missing link.

Improvements will be made to the Third Avenue Corridor, including sidewalk expansion near Macy’s, converting pedestrian signals in the corridor to countdown signals and remarking all faded crosswalks in the corridor.

Will increase funding for small-scale freight mobility improvements and provide funding for a new Freight Mobility Master Plan.

Annual investment in street repair and maintenance will be increased by more than \$5 million, chip seal and crack seal programs will be reinstated, and emergency storm response funding will be provided.

REET revenue is increasing. Expected to increase by \$10 million over the biennium.

2013 FTE impacts – 65 FTEs are eliminated, funding is added for 191 FTEs, net increase of 7 to part-time FTEs. Increase of 133.47 FTEs Citywide for 2013, reduction of 8 additional FTEs scheduled for 2014. Library staffing will be increasing due to passage of library levy.

CNC member asked if the economy continues to improve, will previous cuts be restored? Beth stated the 10 officers and some park staff positions were previous cuts. Level of growth at 3.5% is not enough to restore all previous cuts made.

Based on current forecast, the General Fund is in balance for 2015-2016. Difficult to predict what might happen nationally or globally. City will continue examination of internal service costs, citywide space planning, fire study, SDOT efficiency analysis, and measuring outcomes.

CNC member asked if contracting out issues had been studied/addressed. DON can provide outreach services at far lower costs than outside contractors. Beth stated that Council added 7 FTE authorizations for SDOT and SPU last year and is increasing it this year for outreach services.

CNC member suggested city staff should brief district coordinators on issues, rather than city send multiple representatives out to district council meetings.

CNC member stated DON’s budget has been drastically cut over the past few years. Beth stated cuts to DON this year were small.

CNC member commended the City Budget Office for providing good and current information on its website. However, printing of final budget after December seems to be slow.

#### **Creation of candidate committee – Mat McBride**

Slate of candidates needs to be completed by October meeting and voted on at November meeting. Please let district council members know of openings. Chas stated that Irene is willing to remain as chair of the planning committee, Ref Lindmark is stepping down, but Dick Burkhart is willing to remain as co-chair of the transportation committee. Chas is not running for position of chair next year. Chas commended the committees for their depth of knowledge and expertise. Need to keep them energized and utilize their potential for power. CNC approved Mat to serve as chair of the nominating committee and Chris, Irene, Lauren and Bridgette as committee members.

#### **Committee Reports**

**Neighborhood Planning Committee**—Tony Provine reported for Irene Wall. Notes from August meeting are below:

##### **CNC Neighborhood Planning Committee**

Meeting Notes from August 21, 2012

Meeting was held in Room 370 City Hall

Attendees: Victoria Nelson, Rod Rodman, Lee Raaen, Cindi Barker, Bill Bradburd, Tony Provide, Irene Wall (Chair)

##### **Pre Agenda Discussion.**

The meeting main agenda was to discuss the goals for the committee in 2013.

Before everyone arrived, the chair asked Lee Raaen if he would comment on what lessons we might take away from the controversial "Living Building Amendment" ordinance recently passed to allow the so called 34 Stone project. Lee recapped the history and controversies surrounding the legislation. One lesson was that bringing the issue to the CNC allowed a more communities to become aware of the issues and diversified the letters and public testimony before the City Council. Another lesson was that "money talks when seeking legislative changes." It is interesting to note that the program had been in place for years but only when Brooks Sport and Skanska wanted to build on that particular lot, did the "necessity" of amending the program become a priority issue. The final vote on the amendment included speeches by many council members about the problems with process and calls for future amendments to create a clearer threshold of public benefits. This remains on the "watch list" for such amendments.

##### **Discussion of CNC NPC Future Priorities**

**1. Comprehensive Plan Amendment.** Discussed failure of CNC Comp Plan amendment requesting that the Council take some affirmative action to confirm growth targets and distribution during annual Comp Plan review for the 2nd year. Planning Commission (PC) again opposed it. Their attitude seems to be that the CNC NPC is "anti-growth" and that is the underlying basis of their opposition. Discussed need to find ways to work with the PC and to recommend that current discussion about amending the resolution that created the District Council/CNC should include requirement that the CNC name one representative to the Planning Commission. Also recommended that a delegation from the CNC NPC request time on the PC's agenda to make presentation and seek areas of mutual interest.

**SEPA and Comp Plan.** Committee continues to investigate how upcoming major Comp Plan amendments should comply with SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act). Agreement by committee that the city should not fall back on customary habit of declaring a Determination on Non significance because the Comp Plan amendments are "non-project actions."

Recommendation to ask advisory opinion of City Attorney. At a minimum the SEPA process should require identification of growth alternatives scenarios to be evaluated against environmental impacts including socio-economic factors like cost of infrastructure to support growth, social equity, transportation demands, regional cost sharing, emergency management -related compliance. Comparing alternatives is fundamental to SEPA compliance. Need to research how Council handled the last major CP update in 2004. (see note below where Lee confirmed that SEPA does apply to Comp Plan amendments.)

**Neighborhood Plan Updates.** The question of how the committee can or should interact with the next round of neighborhood plan updates was discussed. We need to review how the 2011-2012 updates for Bitter/Haller/Broadview and Rainier Beach went and how DON and DPD plan to change activities in the future. Also Richard Conlin has indicated he has some other remedies in mind for updating neighborhood plans. The following is an excerpt from email exchange on this subject with the NPC chair which explains CM Conlin's intent and suggests that the CNC needs to decide how to best work with Richard on this proposal.

"I will propose legislation that calls for all neighborhood plans to be updated on a regular schedule, which allows us to manage all sorts of situations, not just those in which the growth target has been exceeded."

**Further he elaborated as follows:**

"The neighborhood planning process was designed to provide neighborhoods an opportunity to define what steps the City could take to maintain and improve the quality of life in their community. In return, neighborhoods were asked to ensure that there was adequate capacity to meet the anticipated growth that would take place in their area in order for the City to meet its growth management targets. The purpose of neighborhood plan updates is to check in and see how conditions have changed and what the next stage of development will look like, including managing growth capacity and looking at what actions remain to be implemented from the original plan and if there are additional actions that would be helpful in the light of growth and change that has taken place. This provides the opportunity for a comprehensive review of what is happening in a community, and what the City should do as the next set of growth expectations are set. Note that the expected growth for the County is set by the State, and then negotiated among the cities in the County. Targets in neighborhoods must be consistent with those overall expectations, and changes in expectations should be explicitly defined when plan updates are launched. That is what my proposed update process will provide. "

**2, Role of CNC and Past Issues.** Committee brainstormed problems with CNC and inability to respond in timely way to citywide issues related to neighborhood growth issues, and related zoning issues. The recent "regulatory reform" bill was an example where the CNC reacted to the legislation but was not involved (nor invited to become involved) in its development. Individuals associated with neighborhood activist groups were effective late in the process at getting some beneficial amendments and changes.

Problems is often that CNC is not well positioned to make decisions and act quickly as legislation is developing because of the monthly meeting schedule, the need for consultation at the District Council level before voting and the bylaws which seek consensus, all of which can take months and issues are decided before CNC can act.

**How can the CNC and the NPC committee be more effective?** Range of ideas discussed including using CNC as the stage for requesting that city agencies having the most impact on neighborhood development issues, i.e. DPD, SDOT and DON be asked to bring issues to the CNC early in their schedule of forming concepts, not waiting until they have policies

firmed up. This would enable CNC to respond to broader policy-level issues in their formative stages. This will require building up more trust between city Depts. and the CNC but DON could help with this.

**More publicity is needed to make the District Councils and CNC more visible.** The CNC is the only grassroots-volunteer citywide advisory panel but it lacks the kind of staff support that is provided to other groups such as the Planning Commission which regularly published study reports and press releases prepared by its professional staff under the direction of the Commission.. Should this be changed? Committee discussed the value of generating more of our own media attention by creating a "press relations"

function and possibly seeking volunteer journalism students to assist with this.

**Reducing the lag time for taking action by getting pre-approval by the District Councils on priority areas.** One possible remedy would be to make formal request that each District Council identify their 3 priority planning/land use related issues for consideration as work items for the NPC in 2013. The areas with the most overlap would be considered when preparing a work plan. This way we would try to focus on fewer issues but ones where the majority of Districts had basic agreement on the goals. This could save time now spend going up and down the approval chain before taking a position on a city wide issue. The chair agreed to bring this up at the next CNC committee meeting (September as there is no August meeting).

Notes prepared by Irene Wall

## **(2) Compliance with SEPA**

SEPA applies to the adoption and amendment of comprehensive plans. WAC 197-11-704(2)(b)(ii); WAC 365-196-620. Therefore, jurisdictions must prepare an environmental checklist and make a "threshold determination" of whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared before adopting a comprehensive plan or amendments to the plan. Ordinarily, proposed amendments to a comprehensive plan will be subject to a new threshold determination. The SEPA rules allow an agency to rely on existing environmental documents, including an EIS, under certain circumstances. See WAC 197-11-600; see also WAC 395-196-620(3)(e).

**Budget Committee – Chris Leman** – Committee meets tomorrow. Will be working on draft letter in response to proposed budget.

**Neighborhood Matching Fund Committee** – Laine was not at the meeting. Some discussion of the CRT process to date. CNC has final approval of recommended projects. CNC members who had served on the committee had some concerns for discussion at the next meeting.

**November meeting** – Councilmembers Licata and Clark have asked to attend to discuss cannabis regulations. Will discuss Alcohol impact Areas at the October meeting.

**CNC effectiveness - Jody Grage** – suggestion to have committee reports delivered via e-mail rather than at full CNC meeting. Need to find a way for CNC to get out in front of issues, rather than being reactive. Need to be a better liaison in both directions – from city to community and from community to city. Need to share good ideas between district councils. Individuals on councils need to know each other better as well. CNC member stated it's good to allow time on agenda for free dialogue and department presentations should be limited.